

Mission

The Department of Health and Family Services will create a Child Protective Services Program in Milwaukee County that gives paramount priority to the best interests of the child. The Program will keep children safe,, provide a permanent and nurturing family environment, and provide assistance to families, when needed, to resolve problems which hinder a positive environment for children. The program will:

- respond to all child abuse and neglect reports as required by law and standards;
- resolve conditions which threaten the safety of children whenever possible; or
- place children in out-of-home care to ensure their safety;
- make reasonable efforts to reunite the family as quickly as possible; or
- provide the child another permanent family living arrangement;
- utilize foster care or other out-of-home placements only as temporary living arrangements;
- recognize the inter-relationships of education, health care, and housing and nutrition in assuring the best interest of the child.

Business Problem

The Department's primary automates system, currently supporting the Child Protective Services Program area, is the human Services Reporting System (HSRS). HSRS has been operational since the mid 1980's. HSRS is a mainframe computer system using an IMS database management system. The system components are of an aging technology which makes it difficult to modify and support. Designed as a reporting system, it does not provide for the management of cases by workers; or serve as a management information system; or serve as an eligibility determination and payment system for any program under Federal or State law. HSRS is currently being modified to collect the required information for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting Systems (AFCARS) as required by the Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Currently, Milwaukee County Child Protective Services case workers rely on a mainframe-based system and a database that integrates data from Child Protection Intake, Foster Care Services, and Foster Care Licensing. There is no consistent or centralized automation of screening, investigation, or assessment functions for child protective services cases. The licensing, certification, and quality review of all providers, other than foster care, are manual processes. Limited, automated information is provided to the Department's HSRS system for reporting purposes.

In the current environment, the State is unable to provide the kind of outcome-based program evaluation demanded by program sponsors, both legislative and public. The transition of program responsibilities, increasing work loads, the need to improve management information, the need to enhance financial controls, and the constantly changing environment needing management and control demand a new, real-time, automated information and case management system.

Objectives

The State has identified several objectives in automating Wisconsin's Child Protective Services Program. The automated system must:

- allow managers to measure program effectiveness;
- enable child protective services and adoption staff to maintain case records, develop case plans, and produce needed documents using contemporary technology in a variety of settings and guided by standard formats or templates that meet national, state, and local court professional criteria;

- enhance commonality throughout the Child Protective Services Program, allowing ease of transmission of data and information;
- enhance the delivery of family-oriented services;
- enhance the establishment of quality-control mechanisms;
- support interfaces with other existing state systems and agencies, to best use the data and systems already developed;
- provide for tracking and managing of all cases, ensuring that clients are served as promptly and as effectively as possible;
- installation of all hardware and software necessary to install the *proposed transfer system application* in Wisconsin for purposes of testing and reviewing system functionality;
- project management through warranty, including maintenance of a project plan, conducting project meetings, and producing project reports;
- Confirmation of detailed analysis requirements and production of design specifications for the modification of an existing system;
- establishment of the application development environment and development and modification of the system software;
- testing of the system to validate that all requirements are met and that the system functions correctly;
- delivery of complete system, customer, and operations manuals and supporting documentation;
- development and execution of a PC office Automation, Application, and technical training plan;
- development and execution of a conversion plan providing or automated conversion of existing system data and manual entry of non-automated data;
- pilot of the system in all of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Protective Services sites which have been established by October, 1997;
- implementation of the system in all remaining Bureau of Milwaukee Child Protective Services and Bureau of Programs and Policies sites;
- establishment and operation of a help desk function through warranty;
- capacity planning to ensure support of the implementation and operation of the system;
- delivery of an on-line policy manual, on-line customer manual, and help features; and
- performance of a one-year warranty.

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